

annual excursions they rarely went far afield, but in 1824, Benjamin, whose travels had hitherto been confined probably within a hundred miles of London, had a notable extension of his experience. His health was already becoming delicate and his father was also ailing; so father and son set forth for a six weeks' tour on the Continent, accompanied by a young family friend called Meredith, who had just taken his degree at Oxford, and whom we shall meet again hereafter. Leaving London towards the end of July, the travellers went by steamer to Ostend, posted through Belgium to Cologne, and ascended the Rhine valley as far as Mannheim and Heidelberg. We have Benjamin's impressions of the tour partly in an unfinished diary and partly in voluminous letters to his sister, which show in the writer, in addition to some merely boyish pertness and vivacity, a keen eye alike for the picturesque and the ridiculous ; a good deal of descriptive power ; an interest in the fine arts and a knowledge of them, both surprising in one so young ; and a no less surprising interest in gastronomy, regarded also as an art and not merely as ministering to a healthy boy's appetite.

*To Sarah Disraeli.*

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*hursday, July 29, 1824.* MY DEAR SA,

I add a few lines to my father's letter not only out of my great affection for you, but also that you may not misconceive the meaning of his dubious paragraph respecting our

triumph. The truth is that we had a very stiff breeze, and almost every individual was taken down stairs save ourselves, who bore it out in the most manly and magnificent manner, not even inclining to indisposition. We came in with a very fresh sea; the night was most magnificent — indeed, I never witnessed a finer night. The Governor was most frisky on his landing, and on the strength of mulled claret, &c., was quite the lion of Ostend. This latter place we found sufficiently disgusting, uninteresting for anything with the exception of its fortifications and harbour. We left it at 8 o'clock same morning as we arrived, and proceeded to Bruges in diligence thro' a flat but richly wooded country full of